EPHEMERAL FOLK FIGURES

by Avon Neal

photographs by Ann Parker

15 color plates and 128 black-and-white illustrations

Every year, tens of thousands of intriguing life-sized effigies are created by American folk artists in the form of scarecrows, harvest figures, and snowmen. The great majority of these people are totally unaware that they are participants in a contemporary folk art tradition. Until now their efforts have gone virtually unrecorded. The brief existence, the nature of their materials, and, mainly, the very spirit in which these spontaneous human likenesses were constructed, formerly condemned them as unworthy of serious consideration. They were déclassé and truly ephemeral. This is the first book to introduce these naïve creations as folk art.

Only when a substantial number of the objects themselves are brought together into a volume such as this can their vitality and magic, their humor and pathos, be fully appreciated. Ann Parker's poetic images, photographed during the past decade, portray more than a hundred fascinating examples of the effigy maker's art. Surprisingly, no two are alike; each projects its individual gesture and expression to convey the gamut of human emotions. Avon Neal's informative text probes the historical backgrounds of these people figures and explains their unique purposes for being. This is a book which treats the familiar with open respect, and tempts the reader to see with renewed vision. It will appeal to children as well as grown-ups; to artists, teachers, and librarians; and especially to anyone who has ever made any of these fanciful figures or paused along the way to contemplate one of them. The book is highly relevant to the total concept of today's art for it epitomizes the glorification of the "found object." It proves beyond a doubt how important the unimportant can be. Even in our complex industrial society, one need only look as far as his own backyard to discover the meaning of art.

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THE GARRISON CASE

A Study in the Abuse of Power

by Milton E. Brener

This important book, as absorbing as it is significant, traces the history of the strange, often even weird, tale of the investigation by New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison into an alleged New Orleans–based plot to assassinate President John F. Kennedy. This is the Garrison Case. It resulted in a series of indictments and eventually in the trial and acquittal of Clay Shaw. The author of this book is a New Orleans lawyer who defended one of the people accused by Garrison, and his intimate knowledge of the background and the tempestuous political history of Garrison over the last four and a half years illuminates a narrative that seems scarcely believable, except that it all actually happened.

Perhaps not since the late Huey Long, has so flamboyant a figure from Louisiana dazzled the nation, and this book records, in fascinating detail, what happened when the use of a high and powerful office was put to the service of chasing a conspiracy that could not be found.

The book traces the early political adventures of Jim Garrison, including indictments he obtained against former political adversaries, his accusation against the judges of the New Orleans Criminal District Court of "racketeering influences," and trial for defamation of the judges. It details the free-swinging campaign on other public officials, including charges of neglect of office and/or bribery involving in turn the Governor, the Legislature, the Parole Board, the Pardon Board, and the Superintendent of Police. It tells the story of the large promises and incredible publicity when Garrison first announced his investigation into the fancied plot to kill Kennedy, and then the intricate legal maneuvering by which Clay Shaw's trial was put off until January, 1969, when the promised sensational developments never materialized.

Here is the whole story of Jim Garrison from his election to district attorney to the present. This is a major book.

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